

Message Text

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S E C R E T SECTION 1 OF 2 RABAT 3233

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FOR NEA ONLY

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: MASS MO
SUBJECT: U.S. MILITARY ASSISTANCE TO MOROCCO

REF: (A) STATE 132010, (B) RABAT 2265

1. APPRECIATE CLARIFICATION REFTEL AS REGARDS TERMS OF
REFERENCE DEPARTMENT IS USING TO APPLY ARMS TRANSFER
SUSPENSIONS.

2. WE RECOGNIZE THAT CIRCUMSTANCES SURROUNDING THE ENTIRE
ARMS QUESTION MAKE IT EXTREMELY DIFFICULT TO ATTACK THE
PROBLEM IN ITS PARTS. THE PENDING PRC AND OUR REQUEST
FOR MOROCCAN WITHDRAWAL OF THE F-5'S ARE PERHAPS THE MOST
NOTEWORTHY OF THESE CIRCUMSTANCES. ALSO IN THE BACKGROUND
ARE POSSIBLE NEW GOM PEACE-KEEPING ACTIVITIES IN ZAIRE. ALL
THE SAME, THERE STRIKES US AS BEING A CERTAIN INCONSISTENCY
IN OUR CRITERIA WHICH CANNOT HELP OUR ALREADY STRAINED
RELATIONS WITH THE MOROCCANS. IN SHORT, WE BELIEVE WE NEED
TO BE POSITIVE ON SOMETHING WITHOUT OF COURSE LOSING LEVERAGE
ON THE F-5 QUESTION.

3. FOREIGN MINISTER BOUCETTA'S APPROACH TO THE
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SECRETARY ON THE TOW COBRA (REFTEL A) RECALLS A MEETING
WITH KING HASSAN ON MARCH 20, DURING WHICH KING TOLD US
THAT COBRAS WERE NOT REQUIRED IN THE SAHARA, BUT WOULD
"DEFINITELY" BE NEEDED IN FUTURE FOR DEFENSE OF HIS COUNTRY
AGAINST POSSIBLE ALGERIAN ATTACK. COLONEL TERHZAZ, DEPUTY
CHIEF OF THE ROYAL MOROCCAN AIR FORCE (RMAF) ON APRIL 14
(REFTEL B), EXPLAINED REQUIREMENT FOR TANKER AIRCRAFT TO

SUPPORT F-1C MIRAGES AND FOR A TOW-CARRYING HELICOPTER. HE STATED THAT NEITHER WOULD BE USED IN THE SAHARA. THE F-1, AS DEPARTMENT IS AWARE, IS AN INTERCEPTOR AND THEREFORE OFFENSIVE AIRCRAFT, AND IS UNSUITED TO REPLACING THE GROUND SUPPORT ROLE NOW BEING PLAYED BY THE F-5'S. WE SHOULD ALSO BEAR IN MIND THAT THE F-5'S DO NOT HAVE THE CAPABILITY OF BEING REFUELED BY THE TANKER AIRCRAFT.

4. AT THE PRESENT TIME THE MOROCCAN MILITARY BELIEVE THEY HAVE THINGS UNDER CONTROL IN THE SAHARA. WITH AN ALGERIAN SUPERIORITY OF AT LEAST 7 TO 1 IN TACTICAL JET AIRCRAFT AND 2 TO 1 IN TANKS OVER MOROCCO, THEY ARE MUCH MORE CONCERNED OVER THE LONG TERM THREAT OF INVASION FROM ALGERIA. THE TOW COBRA RESPONDS TO THIS THREAT MUCH MORE EFFECTIVELY THAN IT WOULD TO THE POLISARIO THREAT. IT IS AN ANTITANK WEAPON SYSTEM CAPABLE OF RAPID AND FLEXIBLE DEPLOYMENT AND WOULD BE IDEALLY SUITED TO THE TYPE OF MOBILE DEFENSE NEEDED TO DEFEAT ARMOR PENETRATIONS THROUGH THE TWO MOST LIKELY AVENUES OF APPROACH FROM ALGERIA - THE TAZA AND MIDELT GAPS. IT IS MUCH MORE COST EFFECTIVE FOR THE MOROCCANS TO CONTINUE TO USE THE AB-205 HELICOPTERS (THE ITALIAN VERSION OF THE U.S. UH-1H) WHICH COL TERHZAZ HAS INDICATED (REFTEL B) ARE ABLE TO HANDLE THE SAHARA MISSION.

5. THE REQUIREMENT FOR TANKER AIRCRAFT IS ALSO SEEN AS A RESPONSE TO THE CONTINUED RECEIPT OF NEW SOVIET WEAPONS BY
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ALGERIA. IT WOULD ADD ANOTHER CREDIBLE DETERRENT, ALONG WITH THE TOW COBRA, TO A MAJOR ATTACK OR AN ALL-OUT INVASION FROM ALGERIA. AS TERHZAZ HAS SAID, MOROCCO CANNOT AFFORD TO ALLOW HER AIR FORCE TO BE DESTROYED ON THE GROUND BY A SURPRISE ATTACK AS EGYPT'S WAS IN 1967. IN THE EVENT OF AN IMMINENT AIR ATTACK WHICH COULD BE DETECTED BY THEIR EARLY WARNING RADAR SYSTEM (WESTINGHOUSE SYSTEM WHICH WILL BE OPERATIONAL IN 1981), TERHZAZ WANTS TO BE ABLE TO GET ALL HIS F-1 MIRAGES AIRBORNE AND KEEP THEM AIRBORNE BY AERIAL REFUELING UNTIL ALL ORDNANCE COULD BE EXPENDED AND THE IMMEDIATE THREAT TO THEIR DESTRUCTION HAS PASSED. AN ADDITIONAL USE FOR THE AERIAL TANKERS WOULD BE THE ESTABLISHMENT OF AN ARMED PATROL FLIGHT OF F-1C MIRAGE FIGHTERS THAT WOULD FLY ON EXTENDED ORBIT PATTERN ADJACENT TO THE ALGERIAN BORDER DURING PERIODS OF HIGH TENSION. AGAIN IN CONJUNCTION WITH THE AIR DEFENSE RADAR SYSTEM THE F-1C AIRCRAFT COULD BE VECTORED TO MEET ANY INTRUDING AIRCRAFT FROM ALGERIA AS THEY CROSS THE BORDER.

6. THANKS TO THE RECENT VERY HELPFUL AND INFORMATIVE VISIT OF COLONEL GROSS, WE HAVE A CLEAR UNDERSTANDING FOR THE FIRST TIME OF WHY GOM NEEDS A RAPID DECISION ON PURCHASE OF THE

TANKER AIRCRAFT. THE FRENCH MANUFACTURER OF THE F-1C IS PRESSING GOM TO DECIDE WHETHER OR NOT ALL AIRCRAFT COMING OFF THE PRODUCTION LINE BEYOND NUMBER 20 WILL HAVE THE CAPABILITY TO PERFORM IN-FLIGHT REFUELING. IF MOROCCO DECIDES NOW TO ADD THE REFUELING CAPABILITY, THE INCREASE TO THE ORIGINAL COST WILL BE APPROXIMATELY 10 PERCENT. HOWEVER, IF THE DECISION IS TO HAVE ALL THE F-1'S DELIVERED WITHOUT THIS CAPABILITY, A FUTURE MODIFICATION TO ADD THE NECESSARY PLUMBING WOULD REQUIRE MAJOR REWORK AND WOULD INCREASE THE ORIGINAL COST BY 30 PERCENT.

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7. WITH RESPECT TO THE APC'S MENTIONED IN REFTTEL A, WE BELIEVE THAT THE APPLICATION OF THE SAHARA-USE RATIONALE IS FLAWED. THE GOM HAS RECEIVED 450 U.S. APCS TO DATE AND 106 MORE ARE COMING THIS YEAR. THERE IS NO INDICATION THAT THESE VEHICLES HAVE BEEN USED IN THE SAHARA OR IN MAURITANIA. APCS ARE FULLY TRACKED VEHICLES WHICH ARE NOT REQUIRED IN THE SAHARA BECAUSE THE TERRAIN IS EXCELLENT FOR THE FRENCH AML-90 WHEELED VEHICLES WHICH, ALONG WITH SPANISH-MADE LAND ROVERS, ARE PRESENTLY BEING USED. IN ADDITION, THE MAINTENANCE AND LOGISTICAL SUPPORT FOR THE APCS WOULD BE MUCH MORE DIFFICULT THAN FOR THE FRENCH AND SPANISH VEHICLES.

8. WE RECOGNIZE THAT AFRICA-WIDE ARMS POLICY CONSIDERATIONS PLAY A ROLE IN OUR POSITION, BUT WE SERIOUSLY QUESTION WHETHER THESE SHOULD APPLY TO THE MAGHREB, ESPECIALLY FOR AN ITEM LIKE THE AERIAL TANKERS, OF WHICH DELIVERY WOULD BE TWO YEARS AWAY. HAS ANYONE TAKEN A LOOK AT THE ALGERIAN AIRCRAFT INVENTORY OF LATE IN THE WAKE OF EXTENSIVE SOVIET DELIVERIS IN 1978? IT WOULD APPEAR THAT NOW IS THE TIME TO

GIVE GOM A FAVORABLE SIGNAL BY PERMITTING THE COMMERCIAL FIRMS, WHICH HAVE REQUESTED DEPARTMENT AUTHORITY, TO PROVIDE TECHNICAL DATA AND PRICE AND AVAILABILITY INFORMATION TO GOM ON THE AERIAL REFUELERS AND THE APCs. LIKEWISE, A
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FAVORABLE DECISION ON THE COBRAS -- WHICH THE GOM HAS NOW POSTULATED AS ITS HIGHEST PRIORITY WITH US -- WOULD APPEAR TO BE CONSISTENT WITH THE NON-SAHARAN USE CRITERION IN REFTEL A.

9. WITH REGARD TO UNOBLIGATED 1977 AND 1978 FMS CREDITS, THE BEST OF A BAD SERIES OF OPTIONS MAY TO TO WAIT A BIT. THE PROJECTED FY 1979 ITEMS COMMAND A RELATIVELY LOWER PRIORITY FOR THE GOM THAN DO THEIR OUTSTANDING REQUESTS. PENDING THE RESULTS OF OUTSTANDING REQUESTS, WE DO NOT BELIEVE THAT THE GOM HAS BEEN IN A POSITION TO MAKE THE DECISIONS NECESSARY FOR US TO HAVE MEANINGFUL DISCUSSION OF MOROCCAN PRIORITIES WITH GOM DEFENSE OFFICIALS AT THIS TIME.
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